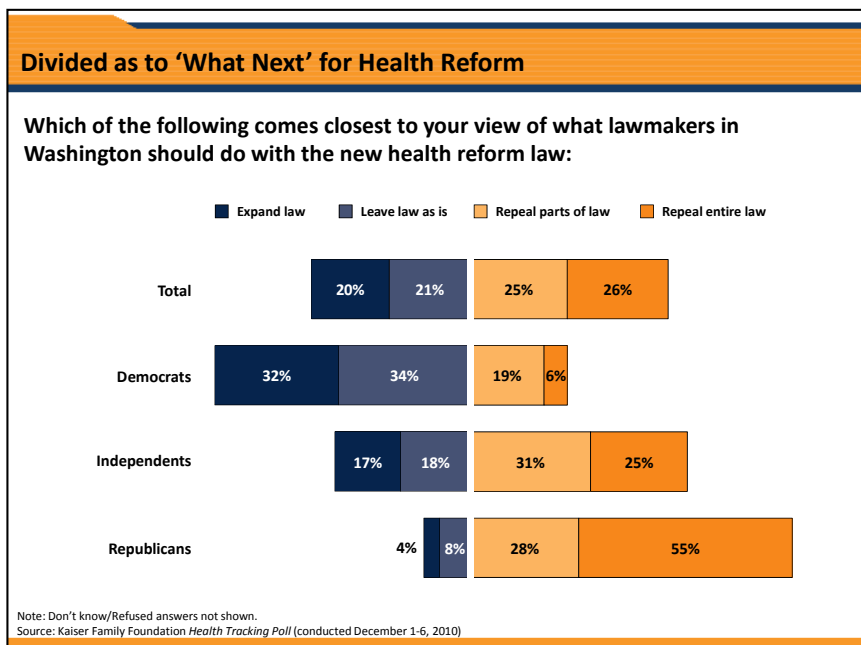
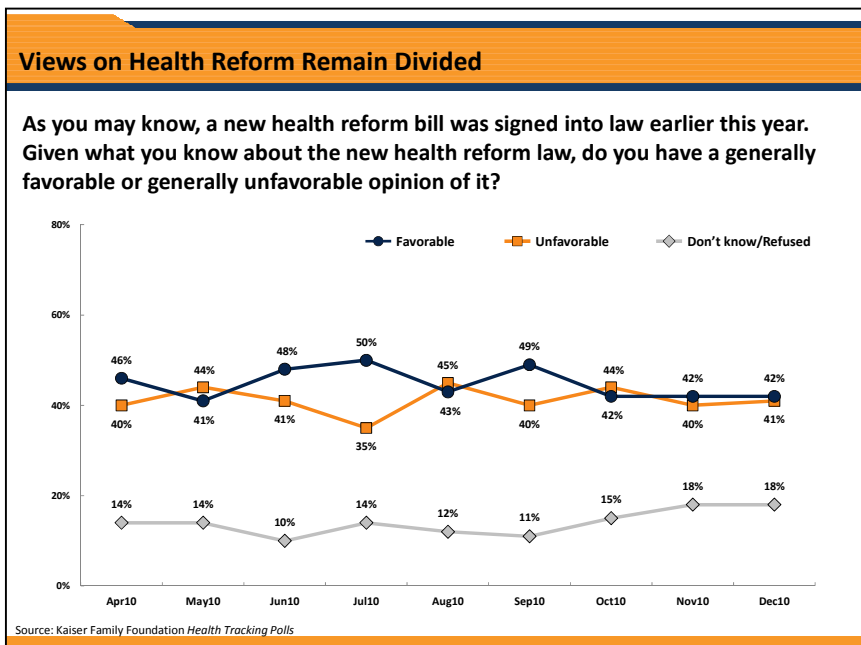


THE PUBLIC, HEALTH CARE REFORM, AND VIEWS ON REPEAL

Public opinion on health reform has been characterized by two main traits over the past year: First, the public has been divided on the overall merits of the new law ever since (and even before) its passage. The last Kaiser Health Tracking Poll of the year found that 42 percent of Americans held a favorable view of health reform, 41 percent an unfavorable view and 18 percent offered no opinion. This pattern has been roughly stable over the eight months since passage, suggesting that neither side has been able to make a definitive case for or against the bill. The second important trait: this roughly even split covers over a large and persistent divide between the views of the Democratic and Republican rank and file.

Both these traits play out when it comes to views on a complete repeal of the new legislation. Overall, Kaiser's December Health Tracking Poll found a good deal of division of opinion on the question: one in four (26 percent) want to repeal the law in its entirety; 25 percent want to repeal parts of the law and keep other parts; one in five (21 percent) want to leave the law as it is; and one in five (20 percent) want to expand the law beyond its current footprint. As has been true since the start of the health care debate in 2009, these views are extremely partisan in nature. Most Democrats continue to view the law favorably and two in three want to either leave it as is (34 percent) or even expand it (32 percent). On the other hand, most Republicans disapprove of the law and a 55 percent majority support the GOP

House leadership in wanting to repeal it completely. Independents have taken their place in the middle: currently a small plurality of independents (31 percent) would support partial repeal of the law, 25 percent support total repeal, 18 percent would leave the law as is and 17 percent want to expand it.



Surveys also suggest that observers use caution in interpreting what Americans mean when they say they favor repeal. As was true in December, Kaiser’s November Health Tracking Poll found roughly half the public in favor of repealing at least parts of the health reform law. But asked to say whether each of six specific provisions should be repealed, majorities wanted to keep five of them. For example, more than seven in ten said lawmakers should *keep* provisions that provide tax credits to small businesses (78 percent), gradually close the Medicare doughnut hole (72 percent), prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions (71 percent), and provide financial help to lower-income Americans to help them purchase coverage (71 percent). Fewer, but still more than half (54 percent), supported keeping increases in the Medicare payroll tax on upper income Americans. The only exception among the provisions considered: the individual mandate, which two-thirds of Americans (68 percent) wanted to see repealed.

Element of Health Reform Law	General Public	
	Keep	Repeal
The law provides tax credits to small businesses that offer coverage to their employees	78%	18%
The law gradually closes the Medicare prescription drug “doughnut hole” or coverage gap so seniors will no longer be required to pay the full cost of their medications when they reach the gap	72	22
The law will provide financial help to low and moderate income Americans who don’t get insurance through their jobs to help them purchase coverage	71	24
The law will prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage because of a person’s medical history or health condition	71	26
The law will increase the Medicare payroll tax on earnings for upper income Americans	54	39
The law will require nearly all Americans to have health insurance or else pay a fine	27	68

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 3-6, 2010)

Some individual provisions remained quite popular even among those who said the entire law should be repealed. About half of those who said they want to repeal the entire law also said lawmakers should keep provisions that provide tax credits to small businesses (51 percent) and prohibit pre-existing condition denials (49 percent). More than four in ten (43 percent) of those supporting all-out repeal wanted to keep improved Medicare prescription drug benefits, and three in ten (31 percent) of this group wanted to keep financial help for lower income Americans.

MEASURING SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL PROVISIONS OF REFORM: SEVERAL PROVISIONS POPULAR EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO SAY THEY WANT REPEAL			
Element of Health Reform Law	Among those who support partial or total repeal (49% of the public)	Among those who support partial repeal (25% of the public)	Among those who support total repeal (24% of the public)
The law provides tax credits to small businesses that offer coverage to their employees	68%	85%	51%
The law will prohibit insurance cos. from denying coverage because of a person’s medical history or health condition	62	75	49
The law gradually closes the Medicare prescription drug “doughnut hole” so seniors will no longer be required to pay the full cost of their medications when they reach the gap	60	77	43
The law will provide financial help to low and moderate income Americans who don’t get insurance through their jobs to help them purchase coverage	55	78	31
The law will increase the Medicare payroll tax on earnings for upper income Americans	37	55	19
The law will require nearly all Americans to have health insurance or else pay a fine	11	19	4

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 3-6, 2010)

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